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♦ **Notes on** ♦

Old Peterborough,

BY

ANDREW PERCIVAL, S.S.C.,

With Eight Illustrations,

INCLUDING

Portrait of the Author.

Arranged, Published, and Sold by Special Permission
of the Author,

BY

The PETERBOROUGH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.



ONE SHILLING.



PETERBOROUGH :
GEO. C. CASTER, MARKET PLACE.
1905.

[Reprinted from type of the "Peterborough Advertiser."]



ANDREW PERCIVAL

(Taken in the year 1901).

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8713 A.M.F.

PREFACE.

Peterborough will find sue. Ex.

The Reminiscences of a Citizen whose memory goes back in detail for over Seventy Years, as in the case of the Contributor of these Notes, cannot fail to be of paramount interest and of antiquarian value. Especially in this case, where the distinguished Narrator has held a very foremost place in the Professional life and Voluntary Public Service of the City. Additionally interesting must they prove in the case of a City which has developed from a comparatively small parish into a populous industrial, commercial and residential Centre. The Peterborough Archæological Society has in these circumstances undertaken the duty of preserving and circulating in compact form the very valuable personal Recollections of Mr. Andrew Percival. In doing so the Society acknowledges its indebtedness to that gentleman for his ready permission to entrust them to its charge. The writer of this Preface was present at the old Wentworth Rooms, at Peterborough, in the years 1883-4, when the addresses which formed the basis of this chronicle were delivered. He thus felt a continuity of interest when the manuscript was recently committed to him to prepare, with illustrations, for advance publication in the "Peterborough Advertiser," in September, 1905, and in bringing up to date, during the indisposition of the Author, several of the chronological and statistical references. Otherwise the Notes remain exactly as set down and corrected by Mr. Percival. The Society expresses its thanks to Mr. A. C. Taylor for the use of the very excellent photo of Mr. Percival which forms the frontispiece; to Mr. T. N. Green (Ball & Co.) for the Photo of the Old Bridge; and to Mr. Geo. C. Caster for the use of "Whittlesey Mere" block, from "Fenland Notes & Queries"; most of the others having been specially taken and engraved for this Publication.

F.L.

Peterborough, Oct., 1905.

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PART THE FIRST.

CITY TOLL GATES.—HOW TOLL WAS LEVIED.—THE INFIRMARY.—OLD CITY BREWERIES.—THE CALCULATING BOY.—STARTING THE RAILWAYS.—FRISBY'S FEAT.—TALES OF THE COACHING DAYS.—TALLY-HO COACH.—A CONTRAST.—A STORY OF LORD FITZWILLIAM.—SMOTHERING THE CATHEDRAL.—THE OLD MILL.—SIMPSON'S PACKET.—MR. WHALLEY'S JOKE.—POSTAL CHARGES.—FRANKING LETTERS.—THE CITY BEADLE.—PARISH CONSTABLES AND GAOL.—A NOTORIOUS FAMILY.—FAIRS.—CITY BELLS.—SEDAN CHAIRS.—WHITTLESEY MERE.

WHEN I came to Peterboro' in Oct., 1833, I think our population was five or six thousand. In the month of August I came down to make arrangements for my being articled to the late Mr. Gates. I was taken charge of by my father, and protected by my sister, and we drove from Northampton, where my father was a medical man having an extensive practice, and could only spare one day. During the night a most extraordinary storm sprang up. We had to go back during that storm. There was an enormous destruction of timber on the road between here and Northampton, and in many other parts of the country. It was a storm such as very seldom rages in these latitudes in the summer months. In one part of the journey was a great avenue of trees, a considerable portion of which was destroyed. It was the property of a worthy squire, and I remember hearing it remarked, "How much Mr. So-and-So will feel the destruction of his avenue." "Oh dear no," said the person spoken to, "don't you know that that property is settled property, and he has no power of cutting timber, and he will be highly delighted. He thinks the avenue is



PETERBOROUGH MARKET PLACE IN THE COACHING DAYS (From a Print, 1836).

"Peterborough has much altered since those days."—ANDREW PERCIVAL.

much improved, as it puts a very good sum of money into his pocket, which is very welcome to him." You see it is an ill wind that blows nobody good.

When I got here, the first thing I saw when I looked round the town was that it was confined by toll bars. There was a toll bar just over the bridge, where the little house since converted into shops then was. At the other end of the town, on the Lincoln Road, was another toll bar; on the Thorney Road was another, and at the back of Westgate another. Our town had four gates drawn across the four entrances; on the road now known as Lincoln Road East, then Crawthorne Lane, there was a side bar to prevent anyone getting out of the town without paying contributions. One enquired what these meant, because within a mile or two on each of the main roads you would find another toll bar, at which they duly took toll, and the only villages that could get into Peterborough without paying toll were Yaxley, Farcet, and Stanground, as the turnpike road toll on that road, the old London Road, was near Norman Cross. Otherwise, our system was so ingeniously contrived that you could not get into or out of Peterborough without paying town toll at the end of the street, which were tolls for the pavement. This was rather a peculiar system. I do not wish to quote Scripture, but you will recollect the enquiry, "Of whom do the Kings of the earth take tribute? Of their own children or of strangers, and they said 'of strangers.' Then the comment was 'Then are the children free!'"

The system that our forefathers adopted for encouraging communication and traffic was this: They put a toll on for their pavements, from the payment of which they exempted themselves, and took it from the strangers that came into the place. The only exceptions were when the inhabitants of the place travelled on Sundays. Toll collectors were then authorised to take toll from them, and also from those who hired vehicles in the place, the result being if you were an inhabitant of the place, and had the luck to keep your carriage or gig or wagon,

or whatever it was, you might use the pavement as much as you pleased, and pay nothing. But if you were a poor person, or could only treat yourself occasionally with the luxury of a gig, or were obliged to hire a trap for business, you were immediately taken toll of.

The present Hospital or Infirmary was then a private dwelling-house. The Dispensary which existed then was a small house opposite the Old Burial Ground, the one now occupied by Mr. Payling, the dentist. After some years, it was removed from this place to what is now the Police Station in Newtown. Soon after this, the Earl Fitzwilliam purchased the present building and presented it to the City, a monument of his appreciation of the good that had been done in a small way by the existing buildings, and which, I think, in the present arrangements, fully carried out his Lordship's benevolent wishes.

There were two considerable features of Peterborough which have entirely disappeared. Where Queen Street and North Street now stand were two large breweries, known as Buckle's Brewery and Squires's Brewery. They were quite institutions of the place, and it always strikes me as a very strange thing that they should have entirely disappeared, as one of them would have been larger than all the breweries now in Peterborough. Buckles' Brewery was certainly a very remarkable one, and carried on with great energy and spirit. There was one peculiarity they had — that some friends of the partners could assemble on Easter Monday and spend the afternoon in playing at marbles. I have spent pleasant afternoons there on Easter Mondays. There were two large tuns or barrels in which the beer was kept, one of which was called Mrs. Clarke, and the other the Duke of York. to perpetuate a scandal at the time when they were constructed. A very hospitable time always followed the game at marbles.

Buckles' Brewery was the cause of another peculiar circumstance. On one occasion there visited the town for the amusement of the people, a calculating boy. He went

through his entertainment with great success, and at last one of our worthy inhabitants got up and asked the question "How many gallons does Mr. Buckles' great copper hold?" The boy said he could not tell. "No; I thought you could not," was the reply. Our worthy citizen had forgotten to give the dimensions of the copper, and went away rejoicing over the fact that he had puzzled the calculating boy!

He reminds me very much of a story one has heard in connection with our own professional experience. A witness was called to prove an assault, which consisted in a man having been knocked down by a stone thrown at him. The counsel was anxious to ascertain the size of the stone. The witness said "do you want to know how big it was?" "Yes," said the counsel. "The size do you mean?" "Yes." "Well, it was biggish." "Well, I want you to tell me how big it was"! "Well, sir, if you want me to tell you how big it was, I should think it was as big as a lump o' chalk.'" Now, I think the gentleman who put the question about the copper, and the witness, must have been very nearly related.

When I arrived in the City, it became very important to me to know how I could get away from it. I lived at Northampton. Between Peterborough and Northampton there are now eleven trains a day. When I came to Peterborough in 1833, and for some years afterwards, the only communication between the town of Northampton and the City of Peterborough was a one-horse carrier's cart, which came twice a week, and I think the large proportion of its business consisted in carrying parcels from the Probate Office at Northampton to the Probate Office at Peterborough. For coaches we were pretty well off. Two mails ran through Peterborough, the Boston Coach, and the Coach to Hull. We used to go shares with the town of Stamford with a London Coach. One of our townsmen ran a coach to Stilton daily, where it joined the coach from Stamford. At one time that coach carried the letter bag, and on one occasion it started without the bag.

There was a man known as "Old John Frisby," who was not quite "all there," and this man went after the coach with the letter bag, and overtook it at Stilton. The poor man was under the impression that he had done the State a great service and thought he ought to receive a pension, and he daily expected it until his death.

The Mail Coaches were very comfortable for travelling in fine weather, and an eight or ten hours' journey was very pleasant, providing you did not ride inside. A journey to London and Edinburgh occupied two whole days and nights. The expense of such a mode of travelling was very great, being five or six times as much as the ordinary first class railway fare. Every fifty or sixty miles the Coachman would touch his hat and say, "I leave you here, sir," which meant that you were to give him a fee. The guard would do the same, and when your luggage was put up, the ostler came to you. If you travelled post or in "a yellow and two," as it was called, you had to pay 1s. 6d. a mile, beside the toll bars, and 3d. a mile for the post boy, as well as something more that he always expected. The 3d. a mile for the post boy, as his regular fee, is about equal to the highest first class railway fare that is paid on any railway in the country.

Just conceive what a change there is in the communication and you do not wonder that the introduction of the railway system has made a stationary nation into a nation of travellers. After a time things did improve a little. The Birmingham Railway was made at considerable cost. When I wanted to go to Northampton, for many years I had to get up at six o'clock in the morning, hire a gig to go to Thrapston, where I caught the Cambridge coach, which ran in connection with the coach at Oxford. It cost about £4 to go home and come back again. When the Blisworth railway was opened, a coach was set up from Lynn to Blisworth six days in the week. This was a great convenience, and was very well supported. There were two coachmen. One was very grave and serious and the other light and frivolous. Everybody knew them

very well indeed. It was very amusing to travel with them.

At last, the Northampton Railway was projected, and it was plain to those men that their reign was coming to an end; but they used to endeavour to convert you to the belief that it was far better for things to remain as they were. The light and frivolous one used to sing a song in praise of the "Tally Ho" Coach. I remember the chorus was:

Let the steam pot hiss
Until it is hot.
Give me the speed of
The Tally-ho trot!

The other coachman used to appeal to your fears, and say how dreadful it was when a railway accident occurred—"when an accident occurred to the coach—there you are! Just fancy an accident at 20 or 30 miles an hour; when that happens, where are you?"

Well, we have survived it, and I am not sure that he was accurate in his percentage of those injured in coach and railway accidents. I have known some very fatal and distressing accidents bearing a very large proportion of injuries and deaths to those in the coach. I may mention that the Lynn coach of Messrs. Hill was very good to take you to the sea, it was very hard work to get to the beach in those days. I believe Skegness consisted of a single house. The nearest place was Yarmouth, and Messrs. Hill's car took you to Lynn, where you could join the Birmingham and Yarmouth mail. I have never forgotten my first visit to Yarmouth when a boy. From the Norwich Road you caught the first view of the sea. As you enter Yarmouth now by rail you go in over the marshes, and the last two or three miles are by the side of muddy water, and you cannot see the sea until you get on the beach. The contrast between the way by the old coach and by the rail is very striking, indeed.

In the year 1842 or 1843 it was rumoured that the London and North-Western Company were about to feel their way eastward, and the project for making the Peterborough and Northampton Railway was put into shape. Our wildest dreams never expected a

railway. We had a coach, and that was quite a novelty. The Bishop and Dean and Chapter had a good deal of property on the line, and strongly opposed the railway. When the Bill came into the House of Lords it was, to our great delight, passed by a majority of One. There is an anecdote of Lord Fitzwilliam, who was an opponent of the Bill. That one day his Lordship was coming down by train, and in the same carriage was one of those gentlemen who knew everything. This gentleman was giving to a friend a history of the line, and when passing Alwalton Lynch said: "That is the road to Milton Park, and "do you know that Lord Fitzwilliam opposed "the Bill because they would not make him "a station there?" A little further on the train stopped at Overton Station, and his Lordship got out. Just as he was shutting the door he said to the gentleman: "That little anecdote which you just told your friend about that crossing is not true, and when you say anything more about it you may say that Lord Fitzwilliam told you so."

The Northampton line was opened in 1845, and I remember being in the Cathedral when the first engine came down. It stopped at the end of the Fair Meadow, for the Dean and Chapter prevented the line being brought any nearer the town, as they would not have Bridge Fair interfered with. The engine was only about one-third the size of what they are now, but when it blew off steam people said they would never be able to hear anything in the Cathedral! Yet now no notice is taken of what was looked upon then as a deafening noise.

We had next the London and York Railway, which then crossed the Thorpe Road near where the old mill stood. Lord Fitzwilliam compelled the Company to put the line by the side of the Syston and Peterborough Railway, where it is now. There were some amusing incidents connected with the Syston Railway. It was strongly opposed by Lord Harborough, and there were riots and fights between his men and the surveyors of the line. I will say no more about the railway system.

The communications with Peterborough would be very incomplete if one forgot the

river, because the river in those days was very necessary to the comfort of the town. I daresay now, if I were to quote Cowper's lines:

Nen's barge-laden waves,
people might say they did not think the load is very heavy. But before the construction of the railway, and for some year's afterwards, barges were found in very great abundance. We derived our whole coal supply from the river, and it was our great channel for carrying corn and timber. The importance of the Nene to the counties through which it passed was very great. Amongst other things was a Packet called "Simpson's Packet," and another belonging to Messrs. James and Thomas Hill, which conveyed light goods and passengers between Peterborough and Wisbech. I recollect the old gentleman who commanded the packet held a very high rank in the Navy indeed. He was a wooden-legged old gentleman, very much respected, and known by the name of Admiral Russell. He was commander of the Packet for many years. I do not know who succeeded him, but someone who did not attain so high a rank.

There was a joke against Mr. Whalley, M.P., that he promised to make Peterborough a Seaport. If the projected scheme had been fairly carried out according to the original intention of the promoters, there would not have been a deal of money wasted. Some think even now it should not be given up altogether, if only for the purpose of preventing the railway companies from putting too high prices on the carriage of goods in cases where speed of transit is not essential. Goods used to be brought from Wisbech in lighters, and it was a serious thing in frosty weather, because all our coals were brought by the river, and when the frost lasted long there was danger of a coal famine.

Now I may mention about the postage. When I first knew Peterborough the postage of a letter to London was 8d. A little further on it would be 10d., and so on, until it came to about 1s. 4d. When you were going to London in those days you would

receive visits from your friends, who would ask you to take letters for them and put them in the 2d. Post in London, and sometimes it happened that these letters were found in your coat pocket when you got home again! The postage of a $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. letter was 8d., but if you cut the sheet of paper in two and used one-half as an envelope, the postage was 1s. 4d. If you divided the sheet of paper again and wrote a cheque on one quarter of it, and the receipt to be signed and returned on the other and put them into the other half sheet, the postage was again doubled. When I was at school my eldest brother, in a fit of benevolence, sent me 2s. 6d. in a letter, and I was delighted until I was told the postage was 2s. 8d. The matron, however, found a way out of it. She put the 2s. 8d. down to the governor's account, and I had the half-crown.

These rates of postage were very heavy, but Members of Parliament had the privilege of what was called "franking" letters. They were continually being applied to for these franks. They were only allowed, however, to send a certain number of letters, and you always ran the risk of having a bill sent in from the Post Office to the person having the privilege of "franking," and they would send a footman to you, and you would then have to pay your share. This privilege of franking was abused, and one would hear that so and so had franked a ham, and one person was said to have franked a piano! Whether this was the truth or not I do not know, but it shows the advantage of getting rid of exceptional privileges.

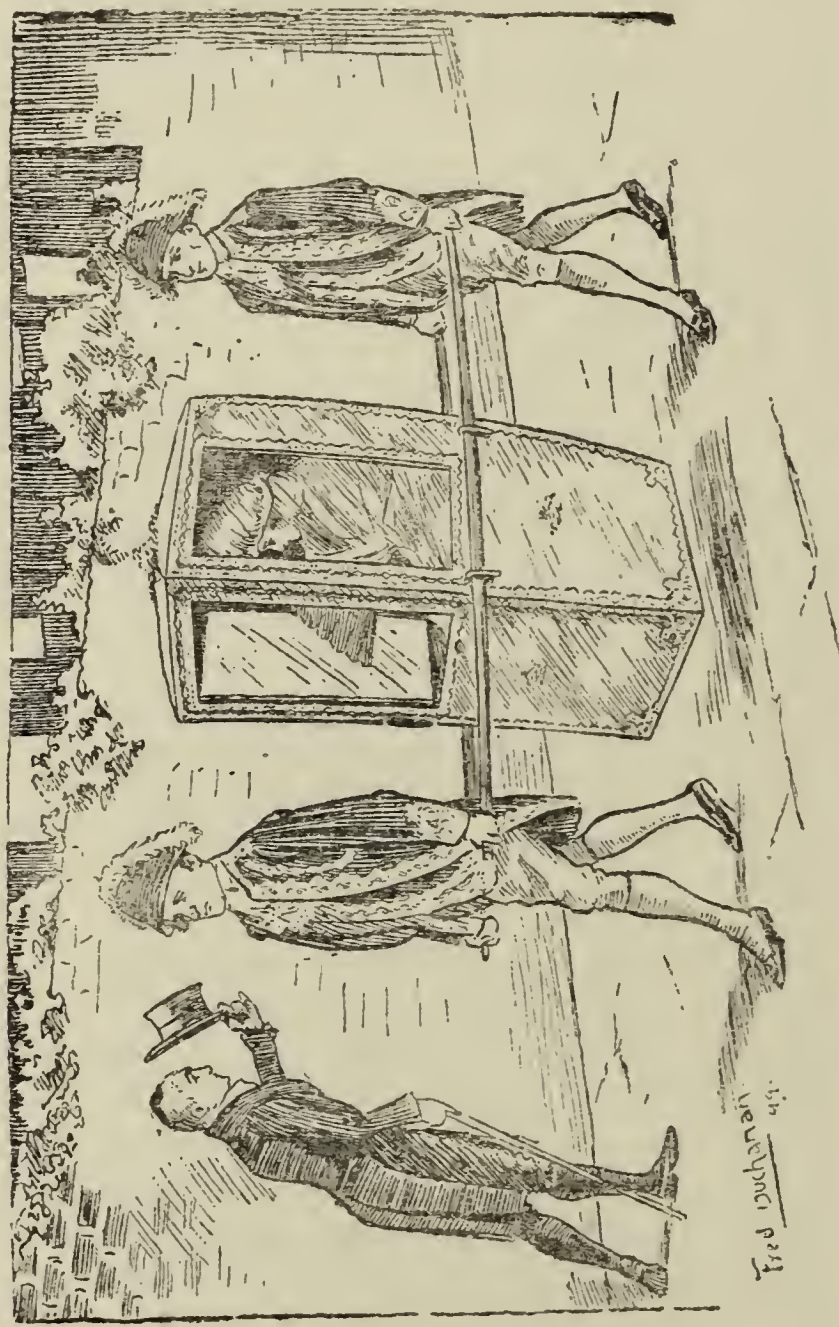
A few words about the government of our City. When I first came to the Town, the principal governor, the one who made the greatest impression on my youthful imagination, at all events, was the Beadle. He was a very important personage. His principal duty was to see the tramps out of the town. He could not arrest them, but had to "fidget" them out. He was always chosen with special reference to his age and infirmity. He had a long robe, a mace, and a cocked hat. He looked very imposing, almost like Old Scarlett in the Cathedral put into a long coat, a pair of knee breeches, and a cocked

hat. He was paid in this way: At the Quarter Sessions he waited upon the Magistrates with a bill: "A man and a woman sent out Stamford Road," "Two tramps and a child, Lincoln Road," and so on. As we say educationally, he was paid by results. He was allowed so much according to his services. He was the principal officer of the place, and was appointed by the Feoffees.

About the year 1857 we were protected by Parish Constables, and I think the principal duty of the constable was to report himself at the Quarter Sessions. We had two gaols—we could not do with one! One of these was that in the Minster Precincts, recently vacated by the School of Art. The other stood upon what is now the site of the Cumbergate Almshouses. The one in the Minster Yard was maintained by Lord Exeter as Lord Paramount. The other one, I think, was paid for by the Magistrates. In 1840 we got an Act of Parliament for a new gaol, and it was brought about in this way: In about the year 1838 or 1839 a person walking through the Minster Yard saw a head pop up out of the pavement, a body followed, walked off, and was never heard of again. The man had simply undermined the foundations of his cell with a knife or bone and disappeared! He was the first that discovered that way of escape!

About the same time in Peterborough was a family named Rogers. They were the black sheep of the place. The head of the family was known as Jimmy Rogers, and he took it into his head to dine one day upon sheep's head and pluck which he stole from a butcher's shop. He was ordered to be put into the Feoffees' Gaol. He picked his way out, and this thief of the district and his family disappeared and never came back again. It was thought to be time we had a gaol, and the present building on the Thorpe Road was erected.

You must not think that we had no amusements. We used to have a theatre on the site where the Corn Exchange now stands, and a very good theatre it was. A very good company used to come for about three months in the summer, and a very good entertainment was afforded. The Bishop and



A PETERBOROUGH SEDAN CHAIR.

“Peterborough was one of the last places in which Sedan chairs flourished.”—
ANDREW PERCIVAL.

his Lady of those days used to make a point of attending during the season, and it was quite the thing to go to the threare.

The Fairs were very important in those days. The importance must not be judged by what is seen of them now. Bridge Fair was then most important. It shows the antiquity of the fairs that they had a special Court. All fairs and markets of any antiquity had this Court which was to do justice between man and man in any disputes arising at the fairs.

We had two Balls regularly, one for the National School and one for the Infirmary. When political feeling ran high one Party would go to the National School Ball and the other to the Infirmary Ball. At other times each party would go to both.

Peterborough was one of the last places in which Sedan chairs flourished. They went on until some time after the railways were established, which altered everything. The men were too much occupied to be able to go with the Sedan chairs when they were wanted, and so they gradually died out.

Whittlesey Mere existed in those days. It was thus called because it had nothing whatever to do with Whittlesey. It was several miles away. Whittlesey Mere was one of the wonders of Huntingdonshire, Whittlesey being in Cambridgeshire. Whittlesey Mere was a charming place for skating in frosty weather and for fishing in the summer time, when there was water enough, and for boating under the same circumstances. Sometimes, when there had been a dry time it became so shallow that you stirred up mud from the bottom when you attempted to sail. It was very good for fishing. One day we were out with a party, and we stopped at old Bellamy Bradford's landing place. It shelved off so gradually that the distinction between grass and water was so graduated that a large pike, probably in pursuit of a fish, had gone so far as to be prevented from getting back to his native element. The place was surrounded by reed shoals, where reeds for thatching grew, and these were the resort of innumerable starlings.

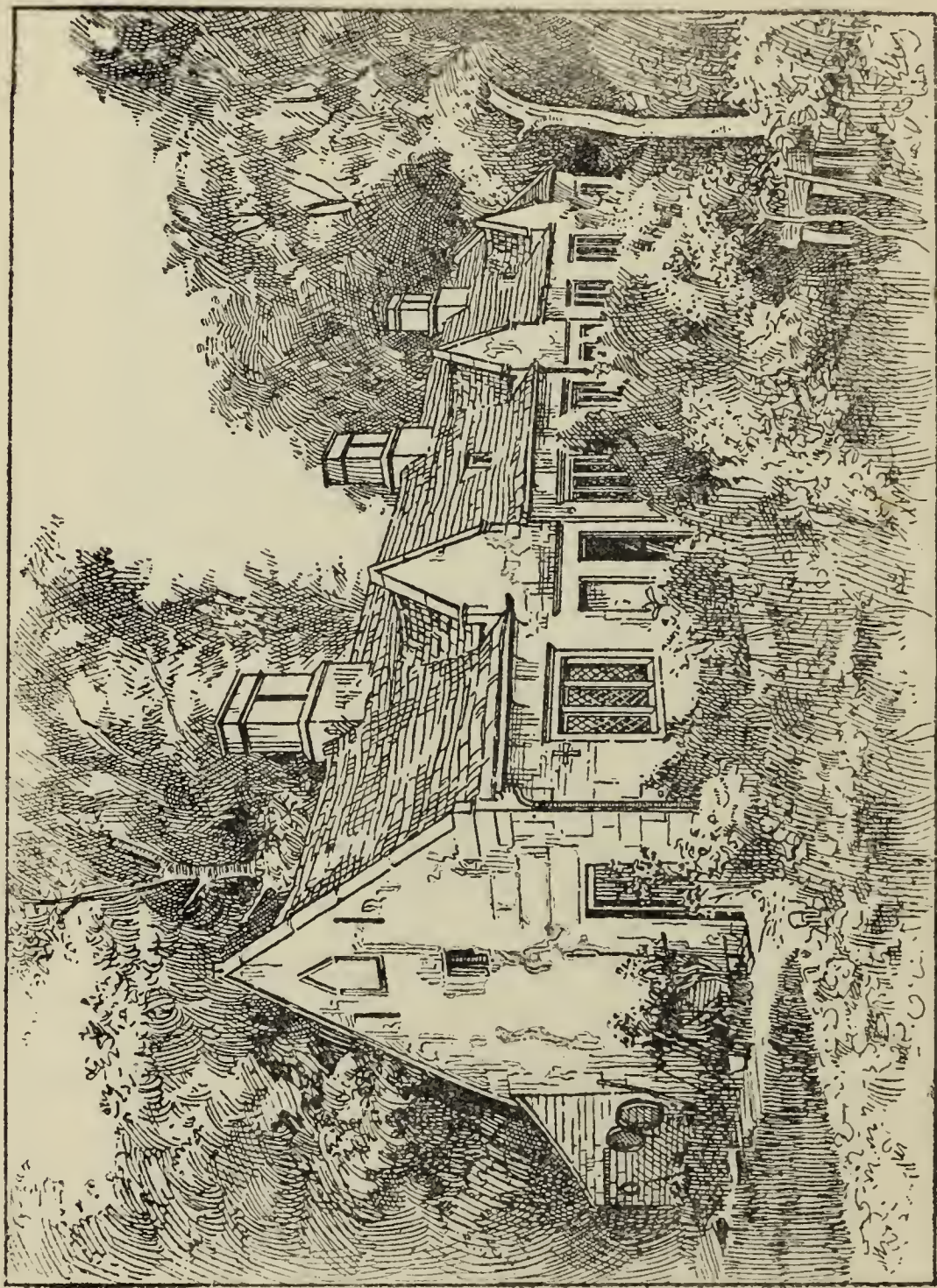


Photo. T. N. Green,]

A BIT OF OLD PASTON.

Peterborough people used to be married and buried in the enclosed parish of Paston—a kind of oasis in the desert.—ANDREW PERCIVAL.

[Ball & Co., Peterborough.]

PART THE SECOND.

AN OASIS IN THE DESERT.—OLD SYSTEM OF CASTOR FARMING.—A LIGHTED BEACON.—THE FEN AROUND US.—DRAINING THE GREAT LEVEL.—THE MILL SYSTEM OF DRAINING. — SNATCHED FROM THE SEA.—HOW LAND IMPROVED IN VALUE.—“INTELLIGENT FENMEN.” —OLD TOWN BRIDGE. — OLD-TIME JAUNT THROUGH THE CITY.—POOR HOUSE AND NEW GAOL.—THORPE ROAD HOSTELRY.—NEWTOWN. —THE GREAT BREWERIES AND THE PONDS.—CABBAGE ROW.—BURIAL AT CROSS ROADS.—FROG HALL.—GAS WORKS STARTED.—OLD MARKET.—LADIES AND THE CATTLE.—WEDNESDAY MARKET.—A CURIOSITY MARKET.—GOD’S ACRE.

THE great point which strikes us all, and which strikes everyone considering the history of the last seventy years in the City of Peterborough is the very great increase in the population, and when one began to think how it came about we used to say “it is owing to the railways.” But that is like telling you that the world, as the Indians say, is supported on the back of a tortoise! You want to know why the railways were wanted, what the tortoise stands upon, because if you look into statistics seventy years ago, before the railways, the population of Peterborough was considerably increasing, and the populations of agricultural districts altogether were very much increasing, and when you go a little further, if you look at all into the history of the land around Peterborough, or the country altogether, you will find within a century there had been a great change. Now, take for instance the immediate neighbourhood of Peterborough. My recollection of it begins, as I have said, at the latter end of 1833, at the commencement of the last century. I think the only parish, if I except Fletton, the only enclosed parish

within some few miles of this place was the parish of Paston.

There you will find the church, surrounded by old trees, and the parish differed very much from others. If you look into the Churchyard there you will find a great many names of the inhabitants of Peterborough and other parishes outside Paston. If you look into the Paston register you will find marriages solemnised between inhabitants not belonging to Paston, the undoubted fact being that the enclosed parish of Paston led people to desire they should be married and buried there. Paston was a kind of oasis in the desert.

Most of the parishes around here were in the position and character of Castor, which until recently was the only open field parish within many miles of this place. I was riding through Castor field some years ago, before it was enclosed, with a few farmers, when one turned round and said: "How should you like to farm this parish?" "Not at all," was the reply. A man in the parish who had a farm of a hundred acres would have to go to his farm in four different parts of the parish—some against Ailsworth, Milton Park, Alwalton, and so on, perhaps scattered in pieces of one acre, two roods, and so forth. So that with a large farm a man would have to go to a farm of a hundred acres to as many different places two or three miles apart. The pieces were so narrow that they were like ribbons; you could plough lengthways, but not crossways. As soon as you turned, you got on to your neighbour's land, which was frequently a subject of dispute. Conceive the state of the cultivation of the country generally when that was the system not only in one parish, but in the general bulk, at all events, in this part of the kingdom.

Peterborough was open. All the parishes, to my knowledge, from Peterborough to Deeping, and east to west, have been enclosed since 1812. There was a beacon lighted at night to light the passengers over the weary waste, since brought into cultivation. Just conceive, if you can, the state in which this part of the country was then, and in what it is now, and consider the great increase of corn that can be grown, and not

only corn that can be grown, but the stock that can be fed by the cultivation of roots and the introduction of bone manure, and then you get some idea of the increased production of the country, that rendered improved roads, terminating in railroads, necessary. For the same reason, the marvellous increase in the manufacturing districts has been kept pace with in the agricultural production of the country, another feature in our neighbourhood.

If you begin at Cambridge and draw a line along the high land by St. Ives, east of Peterborough, by Spalding and Boston, down to the Humber, you will find the tract of land known as the Fen Country. That country has undergone within the last seventy or eighty years, or a great part of it, a change even more striking than that which has passed over the uplands. At first you would be inclined to doubt whether there were any such places as the Fens at all. If you say to anybody "Don't you live in the Fens"? the reply will be "Oh, no." At Peterborough we are not in the Fens. Of course not! There is Flag Fen, and there is Borough Fen, but we are on high ground, and not in the Fen, and you will find, even if you go east of Wisbech, where the land is called marsh land, which sounds rather funny, that the farmers and graziers there will say they don't live in the Fens. And walking towards the sea you will always be told you have come to the wrong place, you must go a little further, and then you will find the Fen country! But still, take the Fens as we know them, extending from Peterborough to Cambridge, and down by Boston nearly to the Humber.

I will confine my observations to that which most comes within my own knowledge, that district of the Fens known as the Bedford Level, called the South, the Middle, and the North Level. From the beginning of Crowland on the North, down to, say, the Middle by March and Lynn, and the South down to Cambridge. In the year 1637 a Charter was passed by Charles I. for the improvement of that country, and we form some notion of what it must have been—the weary waste of waters it must have been—

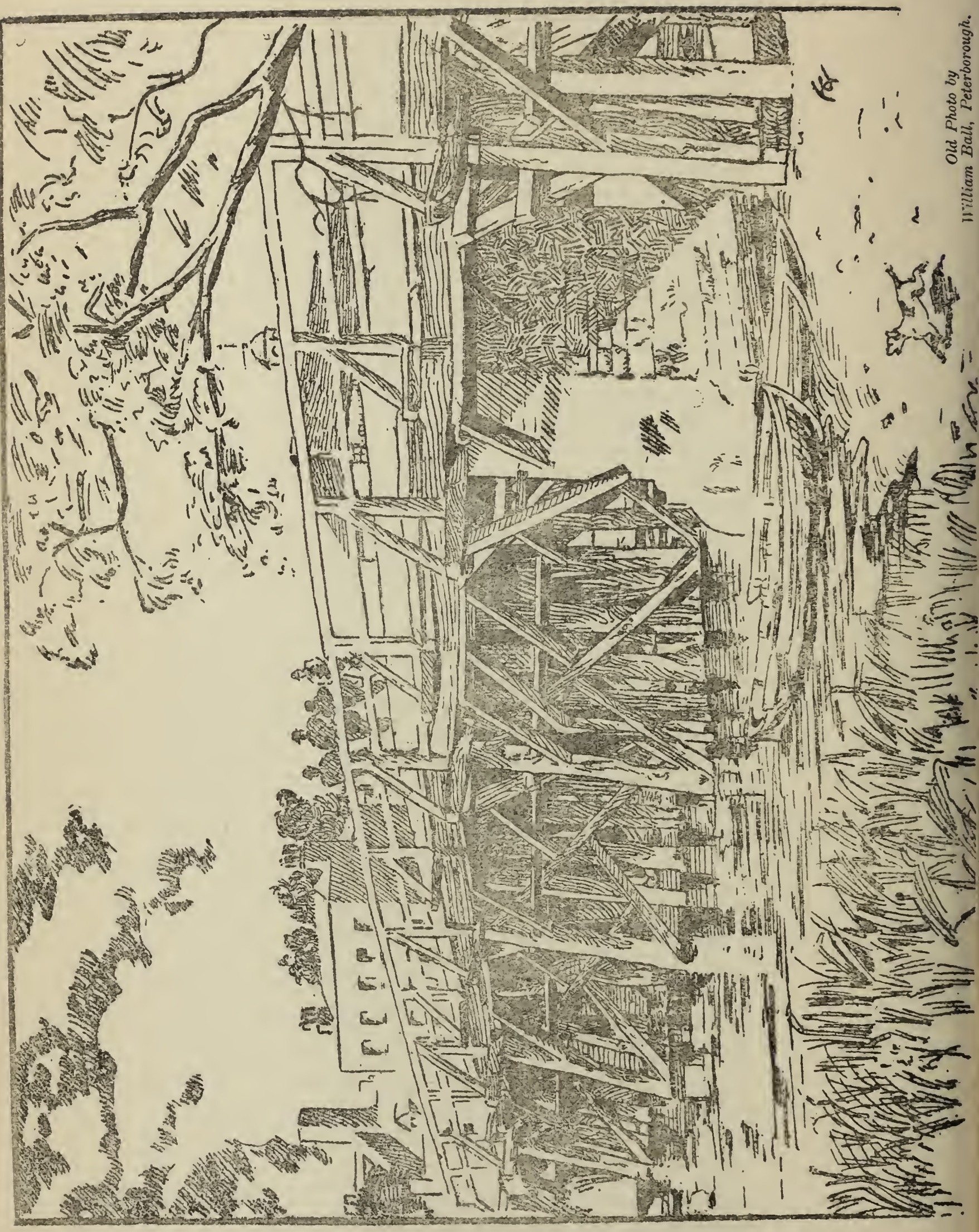
from the preamble of the Charter of Incorporation. It is described as being generally covered with water, of little advantage to mankind, except yielding some few river fish and water fowl, that is when you may catch them, and on lucky days you may shoot wild ducks. Adventurers had endeavoured to make lines of meadows, which had made such progress that it was hoped this place, which had lately presented nothing to the eye but waters and a few reeds thinly scattered here and there, might, under Divine mercy, become some of it pleasant pasture for cattle, with many houses belonging to the inhabitants. That seemed to have been the extreme notion of what could be made of that country in the way of production. Going on to the year 1830, when the last history of the Bedford Level was written by Mr. Samuel Wells, well known as the Register of the Corporation, he speaks of it seventy-five years ago as a matter of congratulation that at that time, when they had improved it sufficiently to grow oats and cole seed, that the cultivation of wheat had begun to extend itself into the Fen country. He spoke of it almost as a novelty, and says that the Corporation, soon after its formation, had interfered to prevent the inhabitants, occupiers, and owners of property from improving and draining by mills. He says that the system of drainage by mills was abandoned in consequence of the result of the suit to prevent it being favourable to the Corporation.

However, in a short time, after many struggles, the Level becoming so inundated by the choking of interior drains, the defective state of the rivers, and neglected improvement of outfalls, the Corporation found it impossible to resist the importunity of the country to resort to artificial drainage, and therefore waived their objection, and allowed a return of the mill system. The mill system up to 1830 consisted simply of working a machine by wind to lift the water out of some embanked portion of the Fens into a drain at a higher level, to conduct it to one of the main drains of the Corporation to the outfall in the sea. Seventy years ago, Mr. Wells tells us, in

the whole district of the Bedford Level — 350,000 acres—There were only five steam engines, one being in the parish of Newboro', put up on the enclosuse. He says there was a general opinion that steam drainage would be further prosecuted, but this depended upon the finances of the district, and he goes on to say many intelligent Fenmen indulged the hope of acquiring a natural drainage, when the result of the work now undertaken, in a greater or a less degree on all three levels, can be fully understood and ascertained. The author, however, says he cannot rank himself amongst the number of those sanguine persons. He thought it great progress to get five steam engines, and hoping they would get more, he, as an intelligent Fenman, thought it was as much as he could anticipate.

I think in the year 1827 or 1828 one of those works, the Nene outfall, had been undertaken, the object of which was to make the channel to the sea through the high and shifting sands, which were at the entrance of the Wash, through which the waters of the Nene found their way to the sea. It was carried out. I think Mr. Tycho Wing was the great inaugurator and Sir Jno. Rennie the engineer. It was so thoroughly successful that it at once allowed the interior drainage of the country to be vastly improved, and not only so, but up to the present time, by the operation of the Nene Outfall Act, no less than 5,800 acres of land have been actually reclaimed from the sea, the value of which is at least from £40 to £50 per acre. Not only was the Fen district materially improved, but a tract of country equal to a large parish was obtained, the value of which alone would, in a measure, repay all the expense of the undertaking. Then they went on, following the success of that, to get the North Level Act in 1830. The effect of that was that water mills and steam mills disappeared, and they now have natural drainage by the water finding its way by gravitation to the sea.

In 1840 a similar work was begun in the Middle Level, and they now have natural drainage in nearly the whole of that Level. The only exception is about Whittlesey



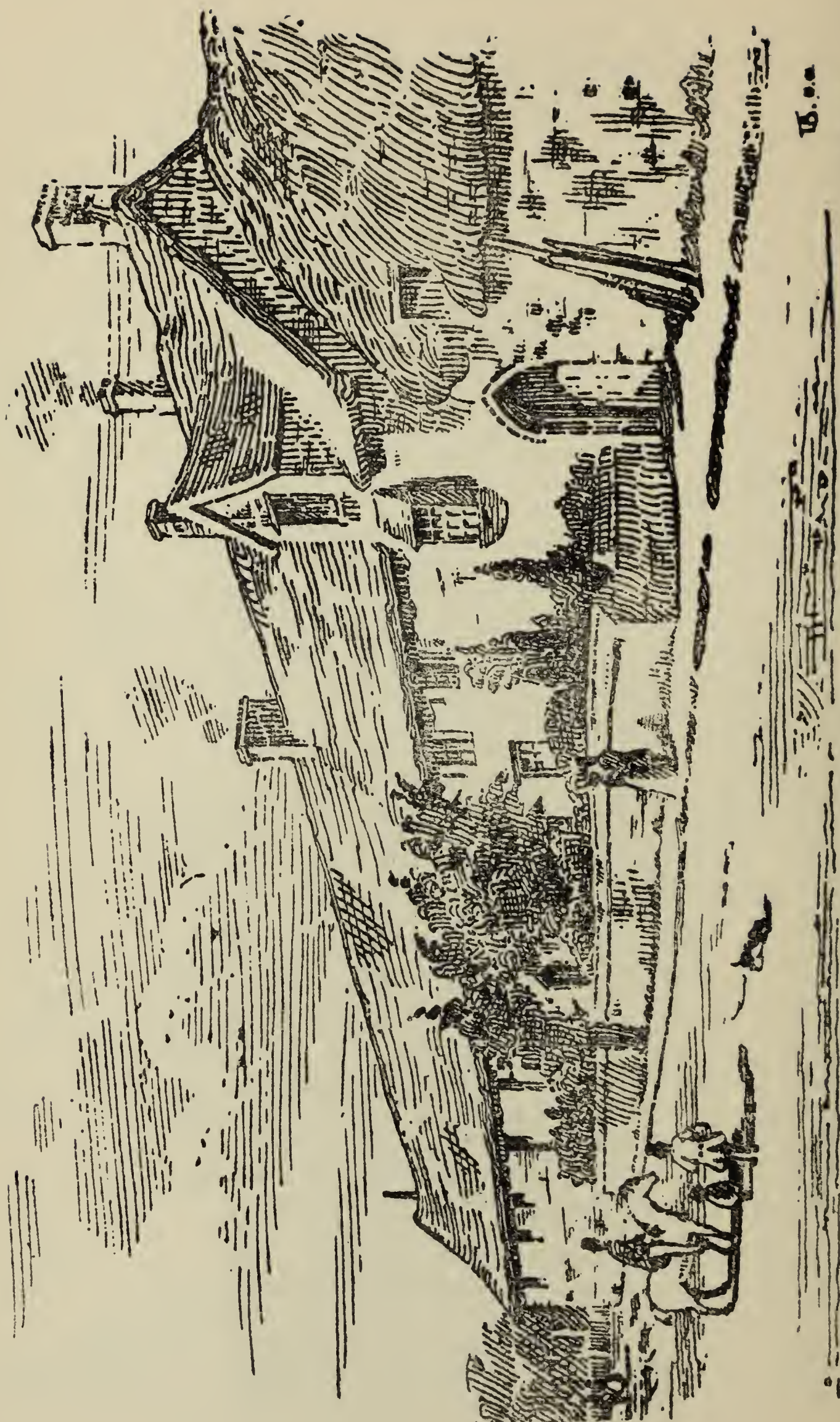
Old Photo by
William Ball, Peterborough.

WOODEN BRIDGE OVER RIVER

Mere, where they have a steam pump and a steam water-wheel to carry away the floods. What was the effect of that? In the first place a tax was put on. In the Middle Level and North Level the yearly tax may be taken at about 8s. 6d. or 9s. per acre altogether. It sounds a very large sum where the land itself, in many instances, was worth next to nothing before, but the effect has been that in that district, I am not exaggerating when I say, leaving the tax out of the question, that is, after putting the tax on the land and comparing it to what it was before, the land is worth double, and, in many instances, treble, and where land without the tax was worth £10 an acre, it is now worth £20 or £30. I have had through my hands deeds of an estate in the Fen. It contained 200 acres. In 1824 it was sold for £1,155; in 1829 for £1,880. In 1882, notwithstanding the time of depression, it was sold for £5,000, without any special bargain. Just think of the increase in the value of the country in consequence of what has been done, and I think you will see at once why the district has required railway accommodation.

Mr. Wells speaks of the "Intelligent Fenmen." I believe in their intelligence! In their Parliamentary battles they are as warlike as people can be in protecting the valuable interests of which they are the custodians, and counsel in Parliamentary committees have often said: "How well those men understand their business; how ready they are, and what talent they show in stating and maintaining their cause." That is rather a digression, but it accounts very much, I think, for the great changes in this part of the country to which we belong.

Now let me endeavour to show the changes in Peterborough proper. I will supply an omission, with an apology to my old friend, the old Town Bridge. I am ashamed to find that in my previous notes I had omitted to say anything about it. That was rather extraordinary, because I had my mind on it, and when I first came from Northampton my first acquaintance with Peterborough must have been "over that bridge." There is an old proverb which says "Find no fault



From an

SEXTON BARNES.

"A Fine Old Building ; an object which vanished when the Railways were made, because now it is the Site of G.N. Station."—

ANDREW PERCIVAL.

[*Old Print.*

U. 3. 3

with the bridge which carries you over." With every disposition to be charitable, that is the only good thing I can say of the old Bridge. It carried me over, and there was no instance that it ever fell in, but there was always a fear that it would fall, and everybody thought it ought to fall, but it did not, and I mention this because I think our new Bridge is a striking instance of the public spirit of the inhabitants of Peterborough and the neighbourhood in subscribing the cost of one-half of it, and also of the fairness and liberality which the county authorities displayed in meeting the inhabitants in assisting to get a new bridge—a credit to the district—rather than patch up that shabby, ramshackle concern, which, patched from time to time, might have outlived another hundred years, and a suspicion that it would fall, but never actually falling.

We will walk up Bridge Street and take a turn round the outskirts of the town as I knew it years ago. Going past the toll-bar in Cowgate we come to the building known as Sexton Barns; probably some of you recollect it, a fine old building; it was an object that vanished when the railways were made, because now it is the site of the G.N. Station. There was a handsome tree near the Crescent, where Peterborough began to stray into the country; the Crescent had been erected four or five years before. Opposite was the house where Mrs. Cattel lived, and then the house where Dr. Skrimshire lived (now Dr. Keeton's). Walking a little further, we came to the Town Mill; very much like the Town Bridge, it had seen better days and, like the Bridge, it had had a history. It had been the property of the Dean and Chapter, and, without the smallest doubt, it came down to them from the Abbot and Convent, who were the Lords of this district. These town mills were mills which the largest landowners kept for the accommodation of their tenants, who were thereby provided with the means of grinding their corn at a small cost, but were compelled to use them and pay grist to the millers, and the old law books contain much on the subject. Its need passed away, the

mill got into private hands; it seems to have become worse and worse, and at last it was burnt down, and we know it no more, the very site having been utilised in an exchange of property for the erection of the present King's School in Park Road.

On the opposite side is the Union Workhouse, built about 1834 or 1835. It has been very much beautified, but it is not a handsome building now. It has had a new front or facing. I may mention in passing that I recollect at one time there was a persistent cry made by some portion of the Press against the new Poor Law, against the hardship of separating man and wife, and so on, but never was so persistent an attempt made in that part of a portion of the Press with such signal failure at the time, although since come to pass where desirable. The new Poor Law took the place of one that was probably ruining the country, and is, in these later days, itself under review.

We then walk along the road back towards Peterborough, and we find the Gaol and Sessions House. This Gaol was built in 1840. There was a fight between the Dean and Chapter, and their Lessee, and the Magistrates about the enormous price asked for it, and a jury was appointed, but a price of two or three times more than was paid at that time for the land has been paid since for land. If anyone had it to sell now at the same price he would be very happy.

Between the Gaol and the Workhouse there is a nice quiet-looking residence (Mr. Noble's). It was, till recently, devoted to the supply of milk, but it was built as a public house, put up by a brewery in order to supply accommodation for people who resorted to the Sessions House at the weekly meetings of the Magistrates, and at the Quarter Sessions. There was a temperance wit of the day who said, "No, it is put there to show the close and intimate connection between the gin shop, the gaol, and the workhouse." We will go back to the town, the whole of that known as Newtown, long before the railways, between 1815 and 1833, had been erected, so that it was, strictly and literally, "Newtown."

We then pass Squire's Brewery at the entrance to Lincoln Road, where the Liberal Club and Masonic Hall now stand, and we go to Boroughbury; all beyond the malting formed part of Squire's Brewery, going past what is known as the "Square Pond." The houses there, including a large part of the Catholic Church and other buildings, are actually built upon that which was, in 1833 (and many years afterwards), covered with water. I was intimate with Mr. Buckle, who succeeded Mr. Squire in that brewery, and I was permitted to fish in the pond as often as I pleased. I have stood upon that spot which is now a public road and have caught pike and eels, and used to have very capital sport there. In the winter time it was a favourite resort, not thrown open to the public altogether, but still, with great liberality, it was allowed to be used for skating. I was very unlucky one day. It was just after a gentleman had bought the house, afterwards Mrs. Willoughby's (now shops erected by Mr. W. D. Nichols), and the grounds about it, was walking in his grounds, when he saw me pull out a large pike, and he was so enchanted with it, he thought it would be a great benefit to his property, and to my disgust, but the pleasure of Mr. Buckle, he bought the pond and merged it into his private grounds. I never caught any pike there again!

Passing the outskirts of the town, we pass the great Tithe Barn, Boroughbury, an interesting and attractive specimen of antiquity and a good specimen of that kind of barn. You go up that junction of Lincoln Road to Dogsthorpe, and there past the last house until you come to two or three cottages, then belonging to a retired tailor, named Mitchell, and people had been profane enough to christen those cottages "Cabbage Row." What connection there is between a tailor and cabbage, I don't know.

Crossing the fields now laid out by the great roads of the Land Company, and which at that time were the most secluded fields around Peterborough, and going down Crawthorne Lane you came to a junction—a

little lane at the back of Boroughbury, now a wide street behind St. Mark's Villas, which runs up to Park Road, and there four roads met, where there was a little tombstone which was known as the "Girls' Grave." A girl was buried there, with a stake through her body, without Christian burial. The place was very well known, and for long remained in the midst of a potato garden belonging to one of the cottages there.

You go as the crow flies to a place called Frog Hall, in front of St. Mary's Vicarage, one of the cottages remained till 1904, and the place had a very unsavoury reputation. It was inhabited by squatters, gipsies, and travellers, and was one of the least desirable parts in that neighbourhood. Then came a row of cottages known as Burton's Row, where Peterborough attempted to travel past its boundaries and get into the country.

Going back, we come to the Cemetery, but at that time all were grass fields let out as accommodation ground, and quite secluded. A little further on were the Gas Works. Now they ARE Gas Works. When I came they were, as compared with the present, in about the same proportion as a small kettle to a large steam engine boiler. A gentleman named Malam—a Hull man—used to supply all the little towns in the country, and used to contract with the inhabitants to supply gas for them. There was no Act of Parliament, or anything of that sort, but permission from the Local Authorities to break up the streets and roads was all that was required, and he chanced it. I think Mr. Sawyer used to give as much time as he could spare from his own business, until he became, as the town increased, by purchase, the owner of the works, and he then gave his whole time and attention to them, and a very nice property it developed into by the time the present company took it off Mr. Sawyer's hands.

That is the history of gas in Peterborough. This brings us back to the Long Causeway and the Market Place. Not the market now, as I recollect it! Up to the year 1848 the farmers attending the market used to

cool their heels in the open air in front of the Town Hall, hot or cold, wet or dry, rain or snow, blowing or still, there they stood, till the Theatre, now the Corn Exchange (since largely added to), became vacant, and it occurred to some agricultural gentleman that they could be much more comfortable in every way if they could form a company, and they did so, and I think no one will doubt that is an improvement. On the Long Causeway, the Cattle Market was the principal institution of the place, and I will tell you why. On Saturdays that place was wholly given up to them. There they were; nobody paid anything; anybody who had cows or horses to sell brought them there. They became the proprietors of the street for that day.

Our widest and best street was spoilt; because if there is one thing more certain than another it is that the female mind most intensely abhors anything approaching contact with horned animals. Somehow or other, it seems to disturb that equanimity which appears to be utterly indispensable to a lady when she is going what she calls "shopping," and it would take away all her ideas to think she was going to meet a restless-looking cow or a doubtful looking ox. It takes away all notion of colour, shape, and measure, or whether the thing will wash or not. The consequence was, the Long Causeway was practically abandoned on market days, and it was not much more used on other days for shopping purposes, because in anything like changeable or damp weather the atmosphere of the street was what I have heard ladies describe (not meaning to be complimentary) as "smelly." Therefore, naturally, there was great rejoicing among the inhabitants generally when that street was restored to a cleanly wholesome state by the construction of the Cattle Market.

The Wednesday Cattle Market had a very peculiar growth. It was set up without the smallest authority about 1845 or 1846 by an old gentleman named Dean, who was a retired farmer, and an enterprising auctioneer named Dowse, who kept the "Greyhound." They suggested that fat stock should be brought, and it came more and

more, until it grew into that excellent stock market, which became one of the best in the Kingdom. There was no foundation for it but that of custom. When the new market was proposed, the farmers invited the then authorities, the Improvement Commissioners, to construct it for them, but they made their bow and said, "If you want a market, make it for yourselves." It was made by a limited company, and it has since fallen into the hands of the authorities, and Broadway constructed through it.

We have another market which has grown up, and that is the present Wednesday Market on the Market Place, which I think is one of the greatest curiosities that ever comes under one's notice. It does no harm to anyone. I went there recently, and I saw an extraordinary medley of things exposed for sale. I wondered at first if they were to be given away! I could understand anybody wishing to sell them, but wondered who could wish to buy them. It is one of the things no one can understand. But it affords the means of getting rid of most undesirable things, call them furniture, or anything else! It puts me in mind of a shop in the Market Place at Great Yarmouth, where they say you may buy anything. A visitor, a clergyman, was told he could get anything he wanted. He said, "I want a pulpit." "Well," his friend said, "go in and try." He went in and said, "Do you happen to have a pulpit?" and they said, "Well, we do happen to have a pulpit." And I think I have seen everything in our Wednesday's Market except that. I have not seen anything so useful as a pulpit!

I have spoken of our accommodation for the living. What do we do for the dead? We have the Cemetery, which has been considerably enlarged since it was first formed in 1852 or 1853, and the rapid increase of the Cemetery suggests the difficulty of the disposal of the dead in a creditable and satisfactory manner with our increasing population. The old burial ground was opened in the year 1802, and it is one of the peculiarities of this peculiar place, and of the old jurisdictions here, that the old Parish Church appears to have had in ancient

times no burial ground belonging to it, a thing that very seldom happens, for the burial ground of the Parish of St. John the Baptist was outside the Minster, which is an extra parochial district. This remained up to 1802, when the burial ground in Cowgate was formed. If you go into it sometime (I am very fond of looking at the tombstones), you will find the oddest peculiarities of language and literature as inscriptions on the tombstones, but I cannot say I have ever found much to admire. You will find a collection of legends which are common all over the country, commencing with

Affliction sore, long time he bore,
Physicians WAS in vain.

Next to it:

Pale consumption gave the silent BELOW, etc.

In our graveyard in Cowgate there is an epitaph upon old Mrs. Thomas, by which you are informed that

Making carpets and beds she did pursue
With care and industry is very true,
The established religion she did profess
In hopes, through Christ, of Heaven to possess.

Such rubbish as that, under the veto of the present Cemetery Commissioners, will, I hope, soon disappear. But there is one in the Cathedral graveyard (the existence of which is not generally known), on the tombstone memorial of an old family of this place, and I trust it will not be allowed to disappear. It is very superior to what they generally are. It is on the right just as you go through the Arch by the Deanery, and is to the memory of one of the Richardson family:

Stranger pass by nor idly waste your time
In bad biography or bitter rhyme;
For what I am, this cumbrous clay ensures,
And what I was, is no affair of yours.

The old gentleman, as you see, has carried his cynical humour to the grave with him. It was quoted in an article in "Blackwood's Magazine" on "Monumental Inscriptions" a few years since.



PETERBOROUGH MARKET PLACE. A.D. 1795. N. FIELDING & STAMFORD.

PART THE THIRD.

NEWSPAPERS. — DISTEMPER.—GUILDHALL.
—HANGINGS.—DARING BURGLARIES.—A LOCK-
UP STORY.—AN ALIBI.—THE MUD CASE.—
WHEN THE RAILWAYS FIRST CAME.—RETRO-
SPECTIVE.

IN my former Notes I alluded to the Post Office. Well, the first Post Office I recollect was a little room about 10ft. square—I think it has been altered since—in one of those houses at the back of the “White Lion” gates. An old gentleman lived there who was Postmaster, and I think he was assisted, being rather infirm, by his daughter, and I have been told it was the amusement of a little grandchild or a little boy accustomed to visit him, that by way of a treat he was allowed to catch letters in his pinafore, and as a grand treat he was allowed to stamp them. At that time the Post Office establishment consisted of the Postmaster, the lady who assisted him, and the letter carrier, who, as some of you recollect, was Mrs. Waterfield, a tidy woman, who had a little basket in which she carried letters. By degrees the establishment got on. You will bear in mind that at that time we were not troubled with Post Office Orders. There was no way of conveying 5s. or 6s. in stamps, or by order, from one part of the country to another. The present Post Office consists of palatial buildings, since their enlargement in 1904, and great departmental accommodation, the smallest room of which is larger than that old Post Office altogether. It would not do now to catch letters in a pinafore, as their number is many millions a month. There are telegraph messages, Post Office Orders, and Savings Bank business. The Postmaster and old woman have grown into a Postmaster at £500 a year,

Chief Clerk, a very important personage, the Assistant Superintendent (Postal Department), the Assistant Superintendent (Telegraph Department), 7 controllers, and a staff numbering altogether nearly 350, with 66 sub-Post Offices—a pretty good number. A great deal of the business is forwarding mails passing through Peterborough, as a convenient centre for such purposes.

Then, as to newspapers, we used to have once a week the "Stamford Mercury," a very good paper, full of advertisements and local news, but the "Stamford Mercury" was always conducted on this principle: "Opinion is quite free in this country, and we are going to dictate to nobody," so you never have editorial articles in the "Stamford Mercury." They used sometimes to select leaders and bits of intelligence from other papers, generally of one way of thinking. Then we used to have the London papers. They cost 7d. each. London papers used to come down the day after publication, after they had gone the round of the club houses, the hotels, and the London eating houses. Those that had been in the eating houses used sometimes to come in rather a greasy form. Now we can have the "Times" on our breakfast table, or earlier if wished. After a time some gentlemen thought we were very benighted in Peterborough, and two of them, very much in advance of their age, started what we should now call a Society paper of a very pronounced type called the "Peterborough Argus." The first one heard of it was, after one or two publications, that a solicitor had inflicted upon the responsible Editor a sound thrashing for a libel. The case went to the Northampton Assizes, and although the verdict was not quite "served him right," the publisher got damages of very small amount. It was one of the most scurrilous papers in its way, and at length it became intolerable.

We now have in Peterborough four newspapers, besides a most ample supply of daily newspapers. It has been very interesting to witness the growth of Peterborough newspapers, particularly that of the ADVERTISER (the first in the field—in 1854) from its small two pages to the very satisfactory form in

which it now appears, with its mid-weekly auxiliary, the CITIZEN. There was also a difficulty as to supply of books. There was a book club, the Church Porch Club, existing fifty years ago, and one or two others, but somehow or other literature did not thrive very much in Peterborough. One gentleman retired from the book club, and when asked why he gave up he said "The fact is I cannot eat suppers any longer." It does not strike me as a good reason to give up reading, because one would have thought he could have read better without his supper. However, they were not then so badly off for newspapers as they were 150 years ago.

I mentioned just now the "Stamford Mercury." I have before me a copy of the "Stamford Mercury" a friend has kindly lent me, that I might extract a little valuable comparison. What should we think if our intellectual food came from sources such as that we got, for instance, in the year 1730, as seen in the "Stamford Mercury." It then had a most aspiring title, as you will see:—"The STAMFORD MERCURY, being Historical and Political Observations on the Transactions of Europe, Together with Remarks on Trade." Here is this little sheet—a good-sized sheet of letter paper, one-eighth taken up by the title and an illustrated figure of "Mercury." Another eighth is literally taken up by "Bills of Mortality of London for the week or month," and from it I wonder what some of the diseases of that day were. One person died of "Headmouldshot," one of "Horse Shoehead," and amongst other things there is very large mortality attributed to "teeth." Another eighth of that paper is taken up with price lists, giving the rate of exchange between London and Madrid, also between London and Cadiz, etc. Then prices of goods at "Bear Key." Another eighth is given up to observations upon the affairs of Europe: "Our Government has received advice from Florence that Princess Dowager Palatine has renounced all her pretensions to the succession in favour of Don Carlos," and such pieces as that, and then the other half is taken up with advertisements. It is a curious thing that in one

advertisement we are told "To Let, the Three Tuns, an old accustomed inn on the Market Place at Peterborough, Northamptonshire," that being the site where the present Stamford and Spalding Bank now stands. That was in 1730.

Twenty years later, in 1755, there is an Ipswich paper, and to show how history repeats itself, for the consolation of our farming friends, we are told that amongst other Acts just passed was one to continue several laws relating to the distemper then raging among the horned cattle in the Kingdom. There is nothing new under the sun. We have had it before, and no doubt they said in that time legislation very much interfered with the markets. Another curious thing in the paper is this: "The ship the Royal George was put out of the Dock to go to Spithead." Was this the Royal George that "went down with twice 400 men"? Public news was important just then. There are details as to watching the French Fleet. Those were very anxious times, but the peculiarity of those papers is that they gave you so little of what may be called local news. Our own local papers give you ample City News and a Complete Chronicle of the affairs of villages; but you may look through those papers and find nothing approaching local news excepting this:—

"By a letter from Thirsk in Yorkshire we learn that very lately a terrible shock of earthquake was felt, inasmuch that several large rocks were removed to considerable distances; several large grown elms were swallowed up by the earth so that no part of them remained to be seen but the uppermost branches. A man driving a cart near the place, the horses were so much frightened by the shock that they broke loose from the carriage and ran away. The horses seem to have behaved very sensibly."

Then there is an advertisement which strikes one as rather peculiar, because I think if some of the ladies now-a-days happened of this misfortune you would hardly put it in the paper:—

"Lost out of Tom Shave's London caravan between London and Ipswich (but supposed to be dropped between here and Colchester) a small black trunk, containing a pink silk gown, with

a pink sarsenet lining, a blue silk quilted petticoat, a pink silver lined child's hat, a white chip hat with pink ribbons, a pink silk skirt, two pair of white cotton stockings, two shifts, two lawn handkerchiefs and owner's other things, with a hoop petticoat tied on the outside."

Now, we have lived in the days of the crinoline, but I never saw one tied on the outside!

To return to the City of Peterborough, we come to the Town Hall. When I first knew it, it was used as a Sessions House, but it did not belong to the magistrates, the fees being the owners. It was also used as a County Court until the present new building was erected. Speaking of the County Courts, for many years there was no summary jurisdiction for settling small debts and quarrels, and one really wonders how the world got on, but one feels certain there must have been a vast deal of injustice for the want of that which really, comparatively speaking, now brings justice home to everybody's own door. Just think in 1810 how difficult it was to get.

The Magistrates of the Liberty of Peterborough had a general commission of gaol delivery. There are people living in Peterborough who recollect a man being hanged on Butcher's Piece, against the North Bank, under sentence by the local magistrates, and I should imagine there was as much heard of it as there is news given in this scrap of print. In 1820 an Act of Parliament was passed enabling Magistrates at local jurisdictions to commit persons charged with capital offences for trial at the Assizes. In the Peterborough Court no counsel used to appear, and just imagine what a sensation would be excited if we were now told by our Court of Quarter Sessions that by authority of their Charter they were going to hang a man. I recollect when I was a boy at school, just before I came to Peterborough, I have been into the Old Bailey, and I have seen put into the dock at the close of the Sessions 15 or 16 men and women, all of whom were sentenced to be executed. Sheep stealing, horse stealing, cow stealing, forgery, robbing a dwelling house to a certain amount

were all at that time capital offences, and you would see in the London newspapers that the Recorder of the City had been down to Windsor to make his report to the King, and that there were so many cases of death sentences, all of which his Majesty was graciously pleased to respite, except some who were to be executed as a deterrent example.

There is a novel of Theodore Hook's which gives a most striking account, partly humorous, and partly tragic, of the proceedings and sentences at the Old Bailey in those days. One recollects in the course of his professional experience many cases of interest. Many striking cases of daring burglaries have been dealt with in Peterborough. At Glinton a house was broken into by five or six people, most convincing evidence was given of their violence and intimidation, and the coolness of the witnesses on the trial of the prisoners. The witnesses, as they very frequently are, were ordered out of Court, and as they were called they pointed out and identified particular prisoners. After this had been done two or three times, the gentlemen in the dock changed their positions, thinking that probably the witnesses had been tutoring one another, and that they would then defeat them; but it did not answer, and it being pointed out to the jury, it sealed their conviction, convincing them that the witnesses were accurate, and not tutored. The same thing was mentioned in the papers a few days ago as having occurred when the prisoners were in the dock in Dublin for the Phoenix Park murders. Another case occurred where a gang who had been the terror of the district, all strangers, broke into a house, the Thirty Acre Farm, at Fengate, and striking coolness and courage was shown by a girl who was pulled out of her bed and threatened with death to compel her to open her box and produce her money. She afterwards identified her assailants, some by their voices even. Then there was the robbery at Orton Stanch. The money taken by the woman there for tolls was brought to Peterborough weekly, and one night the place was broken into and the cash box stolen.

There was a man called Jack Hall who had settled in this part of the country, and was connected with others of Yaxley, who committed several robberies in the district. Hall turned informer; he was arrested for something else, and gave information, and Stretton and a man named Humberston were taken separately. They were first allowed to see, but not speak to, each other, and were put into separate cells. Mr. Preston, who used to keep the lock-up at Fletton, locked the door of the passage dividing the cells, but was careful to leave a policeman in the passage, where he could hear any conversation between the prisoners. Towards morning he heard one signal, the other "Hist! Jack, what are you in for?" "The Stanch," was the reply. The other said, "Jack Hall's split upon us." "Never mind" was the answer, "we must deny it altogether." This conversation was proved at the trial at the assizes, and was relied upon to confirm the evidence. The prisoners' counsel complained of the way these men had been trapped, but Lord Justice Campbell, who tried them, pointed out that they were not asked to say what they did, and they were convicted and sentenced to transportation for life.

One other case, the robbery at the Vicarage. The thief was met coming away. He was described as a nice, gentlemanly looking man. A young policeman met him in the street, and that thief had the impudence to walk and talk to him. They walked up to the G.N. Station together, and the policeman thinking no harm, the burglar got clear away, but he was apprehended afterwards with others. There was a defence of an alibi set up for one, and men were brought from Northampton to declare that he was engaged at a tea garden there at the time. The jury did not believe them. The same defence is one of the most common. If proved, it is, of course, most conclusive, but it is very easy to set up this defence and get it sworn to. It was once used by a man charged with stealing a horse, who was found riding away upon its back. It occurs in *Pickwick*, when Mr. Weller says: "Samivel, why wasn't there an alibi?"

There have not been many civil cases of any great interest, but a few breaches of promise, and one rather peculiar case, known as the Mud case, tried on the Midland Circuit. It was a question of right of navigation through what is now Mr. Roberts' granary against the river, and it was stated that barge after barge had been brought up there. It was shown that it was physically impossible for a boat to go up there, as there was an obstruction rendering it impossible for any boat to pass through it. That trial lasted for years. I was at Northampton during one of the trials. There was another case between two tradesmen, one of whom had been thrown amongst some implements, and in the first trial the verdict was for the defendant; in the next the plaintiff got one shilling damages.

I have previously given particulars about the rejoicings we had when the railways came here. Just let me add one or two words to show it was not all gain when the railways came. You used, if you wanted to go to London, to get up early, and, by the Eastern Counties express, start at 6 o'clock, and be four or five hours going. In going there and coming back you had done a hard day's work. I used to find it necessary to be called in good time, and recollect asking John Frisby, who used to run after the mail, to call me. Instead of doing so a little before six, he called me at three. "John," I said, "do you know the time?" "Yes," he said, "I thought I had better be in good time." When the railways were just made, there was very little difference in the time taken to go to London by the G.N.R. or G.E.R. A good fight took place between the two companies. You could run by Northampton for 5s., instead of 11s. or 12s., by the Great Northern, and I was once beguiled with a lady in going the cheap route. We started at seven and arrived in London at two in the afternoon. When we got there we were so tired we could not go out that day at all. We had return tickets, but gave them up and came back by the G.N. The Great Northern put a stop to it by running the direct journey there and back for 5s. I

tried that, and, coming home, was pulled in by the window, the train being overcrowded, and sat not upon the seat, but the arms between, and experienced for several hours something like you have seen described after a man has been tarred and feathered, in riding a rail, or the sensation of the monk who went into the barber's shop, and instead of paying the usual twopence, wanted to be shaved for the love of God. "Certainly," said the barber; and he shaved the monk with cold water, a blunt razor, and a very short allowance of soap. At the conclusion of which the monk said, "Heaven defend me from ever being shaved again for the love of God." He came to the conclusion, as I did, that it was better to have things at the ordinary price and have them in the regular way.

Washington Irving tells the story of how one of the early settlers in the State of New York, not a very industrious person, walked out on the Catskill Mountains on a shooting expedition, and met with a party who were playing at skittles. They invited him to have some whisky and water, which he accepted, and immediately fell asleep, and at the close of half a century awoke. His faculties were in precisely the same condition as when he fell asleep, but the world had progressed around him. He went home and found those whom he had left young were grown old, and many of his neighbours had vanished from the scene. He had gone asleep under the Monarchy and awoke under the American Republic. That is the story, the humorous side of which is admirably painted by Washington Irving. It seems to me that in one point of view, at least when we exercise that wonderful faculty of memory that power of abstracting ourselves from what has passed and is passing before us, and carry ourselves back to the days of our youth, and for a few moments ignore all that has since passed around us that one is somewhat in the condition of Washington Irving's hero of the tale in America! The history of a small city involves the history and the progress of the nation. The population of the country has increased relatively as the population of our own City has increased. The same causes which have led

to our improvement have led to the improvement and the advancement in wealth, honour, and happiness of the increased population which these circumstances have brought into being. Nothing, I think, could be more distressing than to have our progress blotted out. That is not the way in which a wise and merciful Providence deals with his creatures. Our troubles, our afflictions, the memory of those we have lost, become pleasant memories. We do not fail to notice the beauty of the thought that those who are taken from us are not lost, but only gone before. And so it is in the life of a nation. If one were depicting the life of the nation for the last 50 years one would speak of the happiness that the great bulk of the population enjoyed.

I have lived through the Chartist Riots, the Irish Famine, and the Cotton Famine, which tried the endurance of our artisans in the manufacturing districts, and caused in the minds of statesmen and of every thinking man the great apprehensions as to its bearing upon the industry and wealth and happiness of the country. I have lived through periods of war—the Crimean War, when the thoughts of everyone were directed to our Army in distress barely holding its own through that dreadful winter—and the Indian Mutiny. All these incidents in the life of a nation answer to the troubles and afflictions in the life of the individual. We have survived the troubles which faced us, and how can I do more than say that thoughts such as these remind us of our duties as Citizens, as individuals, as members of the great community, showing us how much we have to be thankful for and how much we are dependent on circumstances.

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